



# picture framing

04452  
306.489  
0594R/A

The material for this booklet  
has been prepared by  
Jo Rothfels  
for the Ontario Department of Education  
Youth and Recreation Branch

## CONTENTS

Introduction	
History of Picture Framing	1
Submitting Work	3
Board Supports	3
Framing Board Supports	4
Making the Frame	6
Readymade Frames	9
Aluminium Frames for Prints	9
Minimal Frames	9
Stretching and Framing Canvas	9
Finishing Picture Frames	11
Bronzing	11
Burnished Gold Finish	12
Gold Leaf	12
To Repair Gold, Silver Frames	12
Ebony Black Finish	12
Mahogany Brown Finish	13
Texturing	13
Painting Textures	13
Choosing Mat Board	15
Making a Mat	15
Museum Mats	20
Framing and Glazing Matted Works	20
Other Mounting Methods	22
Plastics	23
Dry Mounting	24
Shipping Work	24
How to Make a Crate	25
Conclusion	26

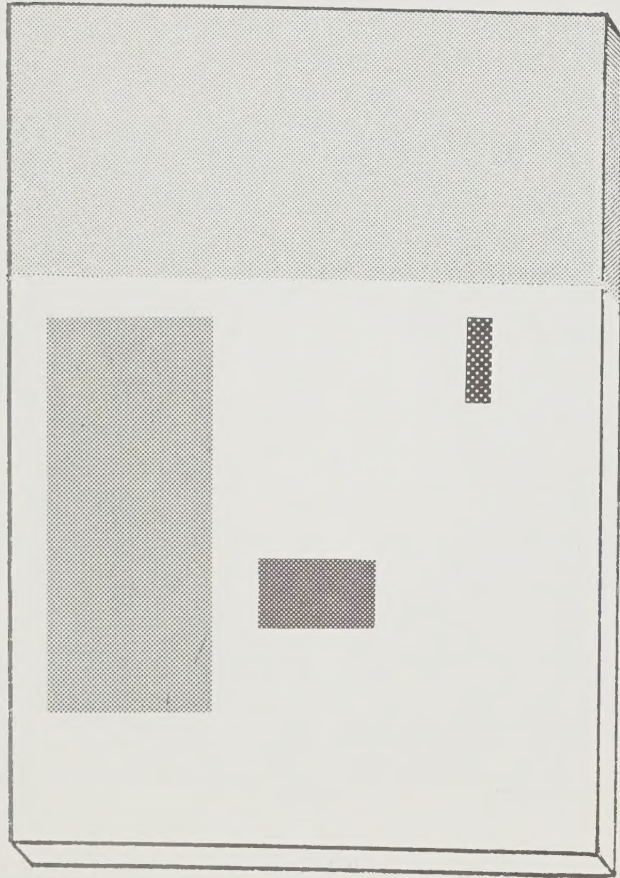





## INTRODUCTION

This manual is intended for leaders of groups of artists who wish to present their own work economically and attractively, or in fact, for anyone in a community who is responsible for collecting and displaying art.

It discusses matting and mounting paintings, prints, drawings and reproductions as well as picture framing. It comments on new uses of plastics in displaying art, choosing a professional framer, and crating and shipping work to exhibitions.





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/pictureframing00joro>



## HISTORY OF PICTURE FRAMING

Until the 15th century the wall was the most common support of paintings. Murals were set off from the rest of the wall surface by either painted borders or carved borders made of moulding.

In the early Renaissance period, the churches were patrons of art and cathedrals were richly ornamented with works of all kinds. As paintings began to appear on altar pieces and as movable ikons, they grew away from the rigid surface of walls and became objects in themselves. This made it necessary to enclose them in frames for protection and to isolate them from their surroundings.

As the prosperity of the Renaissance communities grew, some paintings began to lose their religious orientation and became part of the decoration of the developing architecture.

With the increase in personal wealth, patronage shifted from the church to the merchant class. Portraits and paintings were commissioned for private homes.

Frames at first were as austere as the architecture. But they grew more ornate until in the baroque style of the late Renaissance they were ornamented with intricate wood veneers, gilding, marquetry, tortoise shell and elaborate carving and the frame dominated the painting.

During the classical revival of the 18th century, there was another period of austerity. This was followed by further elaboration during the Victorian era which



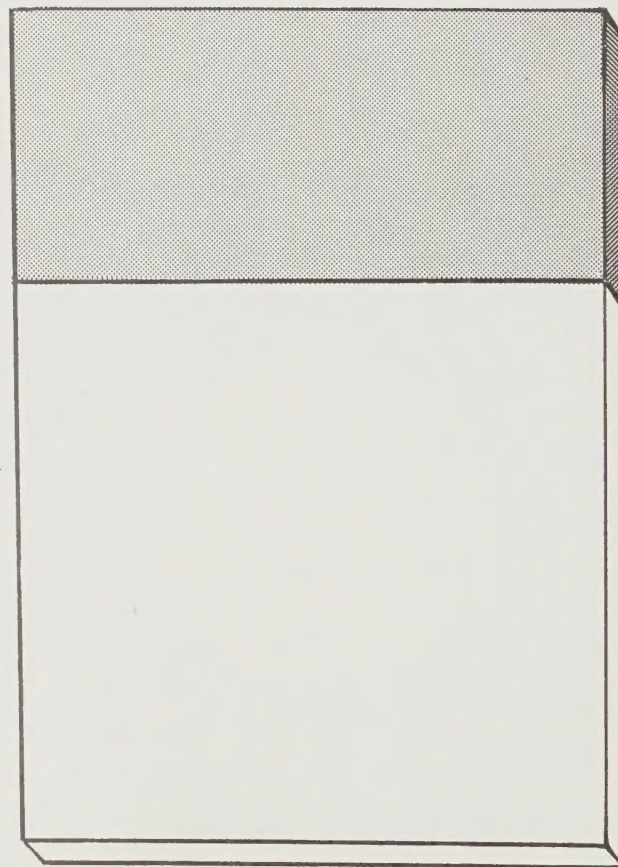
Baroque framing dominating picture

continued until the end of the first world war.

Then began the time of great change and the beginning of contemporary functional design. With post-Second World War developments in abstract expressionism, abstraction, pop, op, and minimal art created on a large scale with big, simplified color fields, the function of the picture frame has been reduced to simple strip moulding or has vanished altogether. Primarily art has become an object in itself. The materials from which it is created are the environment and it is no longer necessary to isolate the art from the surroundings. This is in contrast to the old and long-lived idea that art is an illusion, an ideal of the artist, something better than life or, as the post-Freudian generation believes, a retreat from reality. Today the frame is no longer needed to separate the work from the waking world.

As the surroundings containing works of art become larger and brighter as in the huge glassed areas of new office buildings, and as contemporary design in fabrics and furniture reduces art to a basic function, so too has the picture frame become simplified and elegant. Now there is greater effort to involve the spectator in the work of art. This is evident in the bold execution of the work and in the way in which it is presented.

A narrow strip moulding around a large, bright canvas serves in the simplest way to bring the painting forward from the plane of the wall without detracting from the bold colors. Plastics are used more and more. Because of their transparency, they open up new and exciting ways to display art. As new products appear, artists and framers will use them for new approaches to framing.



Minimal art requiring no frame



## SUBMITTING WORK TO JURIES AND SHOWS

There are many different local, regional and national shows of art every year. It should not be difficult for artists, whatever their medium or level of development to find suitable exhibitions to enter. It is both stimulating and educational to enter group shows. It is a good way to become an honest and realistic critic of one's own work. Success depends on many factors including ability, hard work, luck and aggressiveness. But perhaps most important is the ability to understand what is going on now in the art world, what happened in the past and to work within and beyond it. Contemporary art is the visual language of today.

When an organized group such as an art society puts on an exhibition, the work is usually done by volunteers working under an assortment of handicaps.

Entry forms are sometimes confusing and should always be read carefully. In an attempt to make the instructions clear and complete, they are changed constantly. They will specify whether the work is to be framed or matted. Often shipping instructions are given.

Often the address given for receiving work is a private home or leased space in an office or art gallery. This means the work has to be uncrated, juried and the rejections returned quickly. The work to be shown and the crates must be stored until the exhibition takes place. If the artist enters two works and only one is selected, the other must be stored safely until both works can be returned in the original crate after the show. Obviously it is easier to store a neat crate than

a bundle of paper and string wrapping. Please see the section on crating starting on page 25.

## BOARD SUPPORTS

Ready-to-use canvas board panels can be bought in art supply stores, stationers and in artists' supply sections of department stores in the following standard sizes:

5" x 7"	6" x 9"	8" x 10"
9" x 12"	10" x 12"	10" x 14"
10" x 20"	12" x 14"	12" x 16"
12" x 24"	13" x 16"	14" x 18"
16" x 20"	16" x 24"	18" x 24"
20" x 24"	24" x 30"	

However, the most commonly used support is probably masonite. It is inexpensive and can be bought in 4 foot by 8 foot sheets at lumber yards and home improvement supply stores. It comes tempered and untempered but since the tempered is processed with heat and chemicals which may affect the painting, it is better to use the untempered.

Masonite may be cut to any size with a handsaw or jig saw. It is a good idea to keep to standard sizes that fit frames you have. Then if you have an emergency deadline to meet, or want to change the picture in the frame, you will have a frame to fit.

Untempered masonite is easily prepared for painting by applying a couple of coats of PVA (poly-vinyl-acetate) for a bright, white surface.

## FRAMING BOARD SUPPORTS

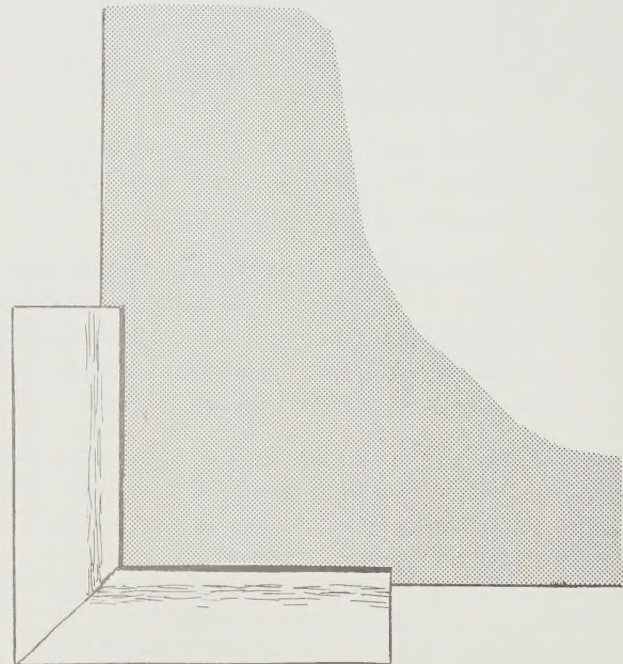
When your painting is finished and dry, selection of a frame is most important. If you can manage it, look at frames in galleries before you start to make your own.

Attractive picture frame mouldings are available from lumber yards but usually wholesale and only in large quantities. An art club might be able to make up a large enough order to buy this way. For small quantities, a professional framer might be able to supply. However, you should be able to get builder's moulding from a lumber yard in any quantity you want.

One way to choose a moulding is to hold it beside the painting. A better way is to have a sample corner piece mitred and placed at the corner of the painting. Color, shape, texture and size should relate to the painting and should enhance it.

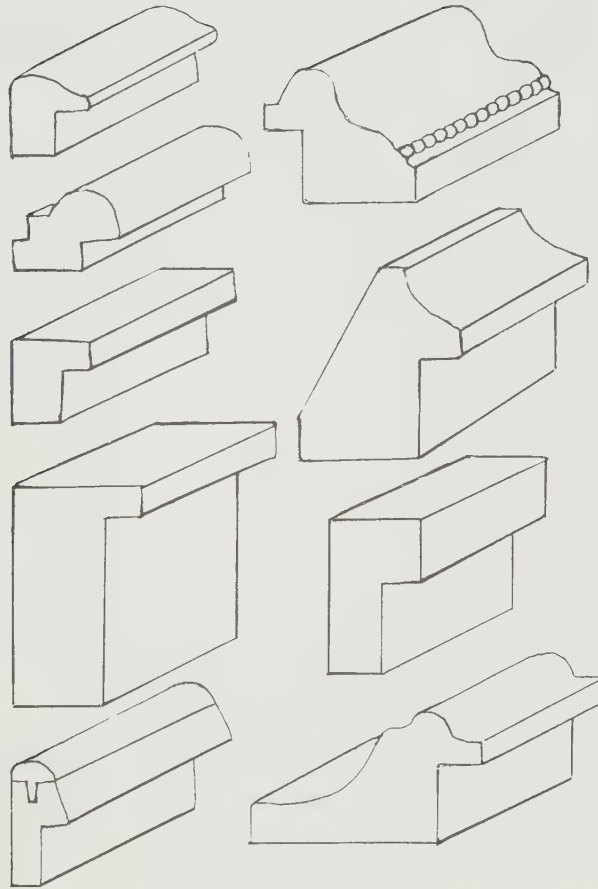
The book *How to Make Your Own Picture Frames*, Reinhardt and Rogers, published by Watson-Guption Publications, New York, shows how to make frames from builder's moulding. With imagination and sensitivity these frames can be attractive. Builder's moulding will need a rabbet cut into the back to hold the board support. You may be able to get this done at the lumber yard. If not, a strip of wood  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick and  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide should be glued to the back of the moulding. As a guide for this construction you may use the profiles of standard picture frame moulding.

Sometimes an insert or liner is used inside the frame to give added space around the painting or to make a painting fit into a frame that is too big. Inserts are



Choosing picture frame

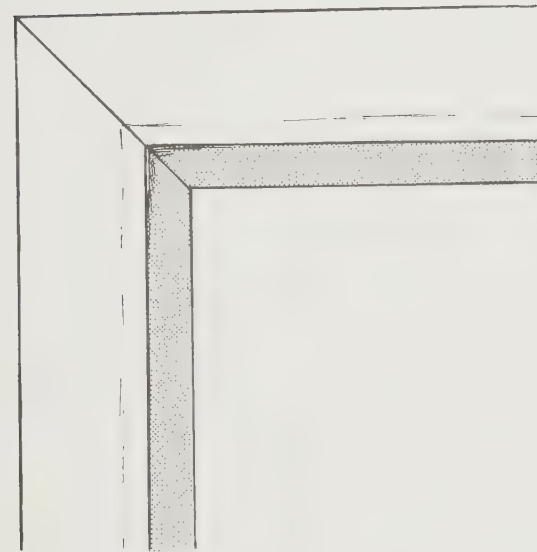
made with simple, narrow moulding or builder's moulding as shown. They may be covered with linen, plastic linen, velvet or other fabrics, or textured as described in the section on finishing frames. Linen finished mat boards make adequate liners and are available from art supply stores.



Profiles of professional framer's moulding (actual size)



Profiles of inserts



Frame with insert



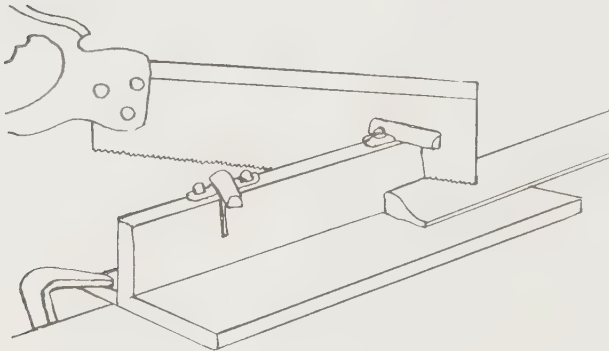
## MAKING THE FRAME

The home handyman likely has all the tools needed. A good, big work bench with enough room to glue frames and cut mats is preferable although the cutting may be done at a carpenter's bench and the work completed on a large table.

It is most important to have a good mitre box. A cheap or worn box will result in sloppy 45° angles. Disguising a poor fit by filling the corners with plastic wood or other filling material doesn't work because the fillers tend to shrink in time.

To make a fine cut, a back saw should be used. A cross-cut saw makes too uneven and coarse a cut.

To glue the pieces together so that the frame stays flat, it is best to use a mitre vise. If this is too expensive four small corner clamps can be used.



Mitre box and back saw

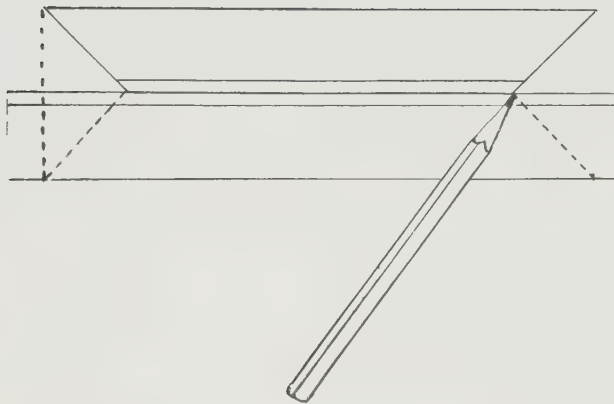
## TOOLS

work bench  
work table  
top quality mitre box  
back saw  
mitre vise or 4 small corner clamps  
C clamps  
hammer  
small pliers  
1/16" nail set  
thin metal ruler  
white glue  
brads (small nails) in various sizes  
plastic wood

## FRAME CONSTRUCTION

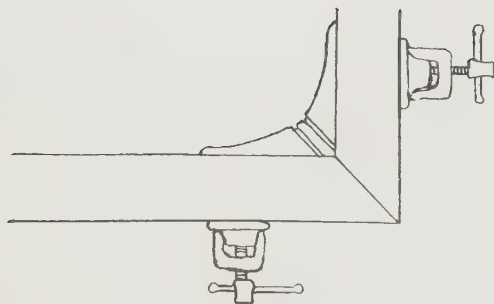
Hold the moulding firmly in the mitre box. Use a clamp to steady it if necessary. Make the first 45° cut. Measure the correct length (which may be slightly larger than the side of the panel) on the inner edge of the moulding where the picture will fit. Make the second 45° cut opposite to the first. Mitre one end of the uncut strip. Then using the first piece as a guide, use a sharp pencil to mark where the next cut is to go. Cut the second side piece. Now cut the top and bottom pieces in the same way, measuring carefully unless the picture is a square and measures the same on all 4 sides.

Next, take one long and one short piece of moulding and put a good, even coat of white glue on the mitred faces to be joined. Lock them into the framing clamp with

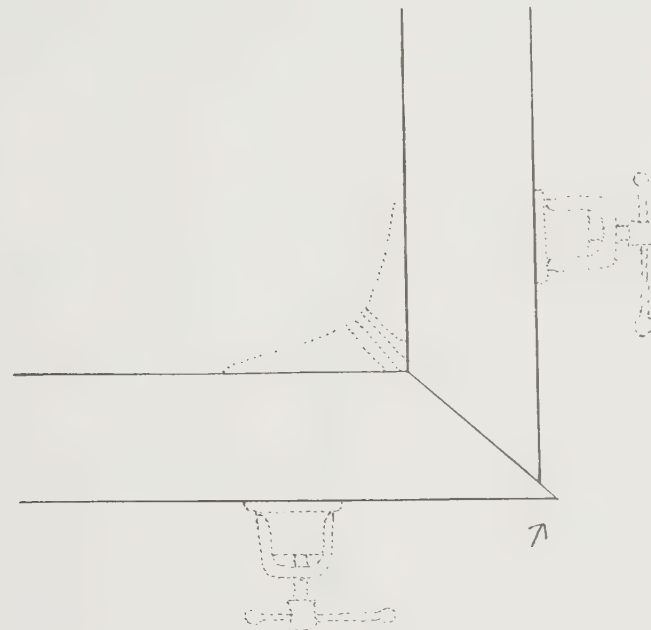


Measuring picture framing

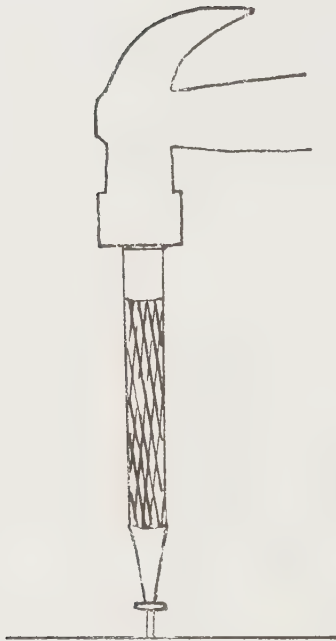
the inside edges of the frame meeting exactly. Minor flaws should be on the outside and can be sanded down later. Tighten clamp and nail two small brads into each side. Take care that they neither split the wood nor touch each other. When the brads are almost home, tap them in with the nail set so that the heads are just below the surface of the wood. Wipe off excess glue. Repeat this procedure for the other three corners. When the glue is dry, sand any overlaps. Use plastic wood to fill the brad holes. Sand smooth when dry.



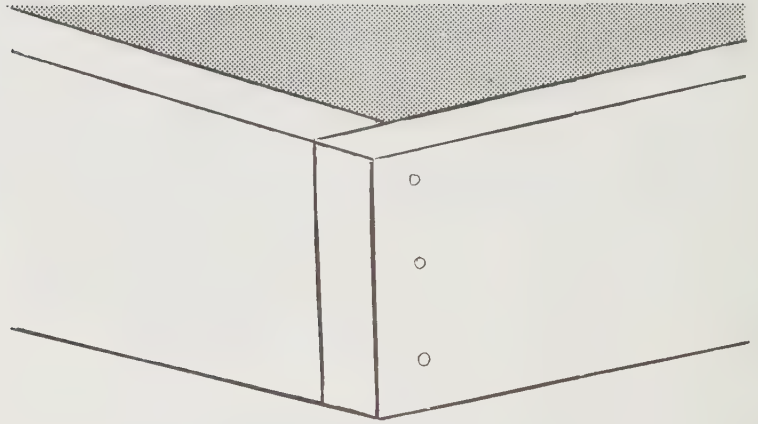
Clamping the corners



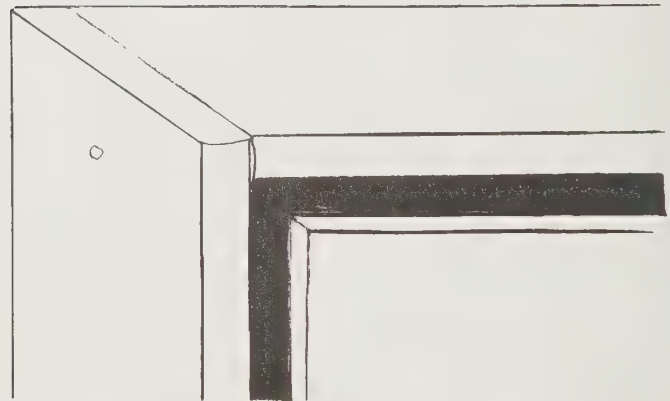
Placing uneven edges on outside



Using a nail set



Simple box frame



Gold faced frame over set in box frame



## READYMADE FRAMES

Finished and unfinished readymade frames are available as are wood strips 8" to 36", mitred and ready to be glued together. Although choice is limited, some finished frames in dark wood with natural linen inserts are handsome. Some of the sizes available are:

9" x 12"	10" x 12"	10" x 14"
12" x 16"	14" x 18"	16" x 20"
18" x 24"	24" x 30"	25" x 31"

## ALUMINIUM FRAMES FOR PRINTS

Aluminium frames sold in kits at department stores are becoming very popular. They come in standard sizes and in silver or gold color. They are widely used with plexiglass instead of regular glass, when work must be shipped to exhibitions. Such frames resist wear and breakage and are almost indestructible.

If you follow the instructions that come with each kit, the frames are easy to assemble. For a print purchase glass at the hardware store to fit the inside dimensions. Cut the mat and the backing cardboard (mill board or any stiff mat board) to fit the glass. Place the print in the mat opening and sandwich it between the backing and the glass or plexiglass. Check to make sure there is no dust or other debris under the glass. Tape neatly all the way around with masking tape. The width of the tape is determined by the thickness of the backing. It should not cover the glass or plexiglass surface by

more than 1/8 inch. Then fit three sides of the frame together. Slip the glass and cardboard backing into this and fit the fourth side in place. If this method is followed, the work will not rattle about or chip in the metal frame.

## MINIMAL FRAMES

Large canvases are often exhibited without a frame. When the paint film is extended to cover the sides, a neat, complete work of art results. This applies to minimal art where the work, produced with the simplest materials without embellishment is the art object in itself.

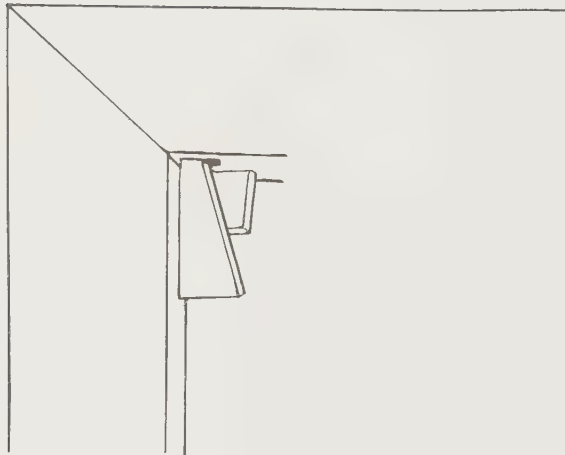
## STRETCHING AND FRAMING CANVAS

If you make your own stretchers from 1" x 2" lumber, be sure they are square at the corners. If they are large, it may be necessary to brace them. Readymade stretchers with pegs are fine for smaller works because they may be adjusted while framing by tapping the corner pegs. Stretch the canvas over the stretcher with canvas pliers and fasten with staples on the back. Stapling on the back makes a smoother finish. Mitre the corners neatly, like a hospital bed, and fasten down.

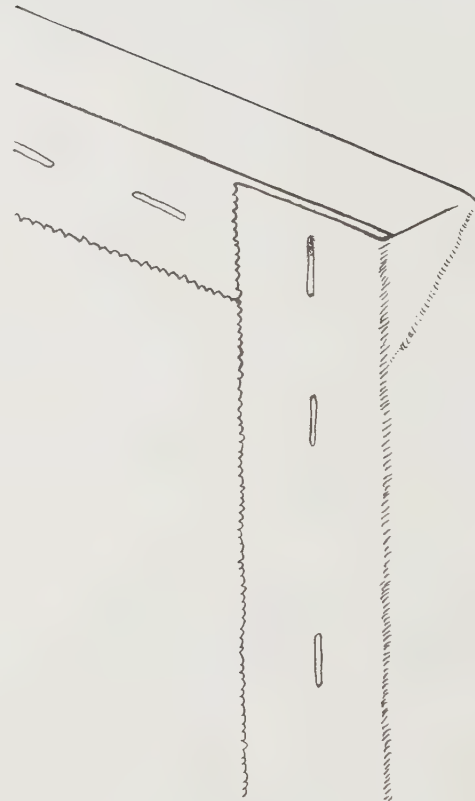
Stripping may be nailed into the stretcher along the sides without mitring the corners but squaring the ends so they meet neatly.

The canvas may be placed in a box of dark stripping set back from the plane of the painting with another frame of gold stripping placed over and in front of it. (See diagram on page 8) This gives another dimension to the simple box frame.

Artists working in the more traditional or in the magic realist style will likely prefer more conventional framing for their paintings.



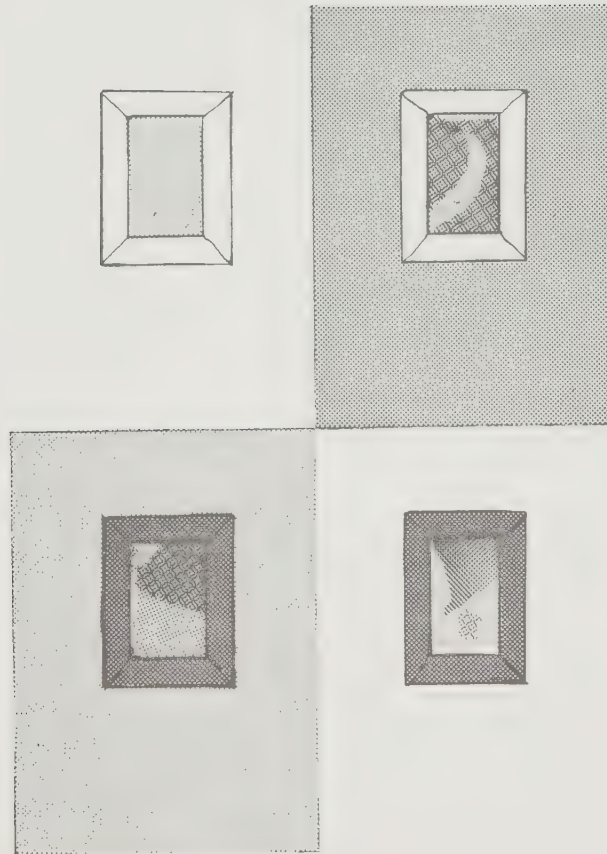
Stretcher with pegs



Back of stretched canvas

## FINISHING PICTURE FRAMES

There are many ways to finish newly made or readymade unfinished wood frames. The simplest finishes are best because a "busy" frame detracts from the painting. Considered too should be the spatial relationships in the painting. A light, airy landscape could be ruined by a dark, heavy frame. Color of the wall, too, should be taken into account. A white frame on a white wall will blend beautifully and make the painting stand out. However, a white frame on a dark wall may isolate the picture from its surroundings or add a glow of light around a bright painting, giving it greater luminosity. The framing of each picture presents its own set of problems.



White on white etc.

## BRONZING

First step is to smooth the wood with 0 or 00 steel wool. Smoothness is important to the final effect unless the frame is to be given a gessoed texture.

When the wood is perfectly smooth, coat it well with white shellac. Smooth again with very fine steel wool. Now, in a small container, mix  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of gold bronze powder with 2 oz. bronzing medium or liquid obtainable from an art supply store. With a soft brush apply this mixture to the frame. When dry, spray with lacquer or clear plastic spray. Another method of bronzing is to add the gold bronze powder to paste wax and rub this into the wood with a soft rag. Let dry, then buff to a glowing sheen.



If the frame is carved or textured, interesting results may be obtained this way. When the bronze coat is dry, cover it with a white or an off-white oil base paint. Before this dries, wipe gently with a soft rag so that the white remains in the depressions and the bronze glows through.

Gold or silver may be sprayed on to the frame and finished with a coat of spray lacquer. Experiment with different finishes on scrap moulding.

#### BURNISHED GOLD FINISH

This is a rich, warm finish with venetian red showing through the gold. It is much used by professional framers. With fine sandpaper sand the frame very smooth. Coat with gesso and sand again to perfect smoothness. If necessary, give it a second coat with gesso and sand down again. Instead of gesso, thick water-base paint could be used.

Next, brush on a good even coat of venetian red oil color. When dry, sand smooth. Dissolve a small amount of burnish gold powder in methyl hydrate.

Stir well and apply two coats. When dry, rub down with beeswax applied with a soft cloth. Burnish with a non-silver spoon or burnishing tool, or best of all, an agate burnisher. Spray with clear lacquer.

#### GOLD LEAF

A useful book is *How to Make Your Own Picture Frames*, by Harold Rogers, published, Watson-Guptill Publications, New York. It gives step by step instruction on applying gold leaf and is illustrated with photographs. Briefly, gold leafing is done this way. Coat the frame with transparent glue size and let dry one or two hours until slightly tacky. Gold leaf, available from art supply stores is laid on the sized area. It is then burnished with a pad of absorbent cotton rubbed in beeswax.

#### TO REPAIR GOLD OR SILVER FRAMES

Little pots of gold, silver or bronze paste can be bought from art supply stores. Rub paste with the finger into small nicks and scratches. Polish when dry.

#### EBONY BLACK FINISH

Shellac the smoothed wood. When dry, rub down with fine steel wool. Wood should be very smooth. Now take a little nigrosine powder (a black, spirit soluble dye) available from a framer's supply or art supply store and dissolve in a cup with one tablespoon of methyl hydrate. Add two tablespoons of white shellac. Mix. Strain through cheesecloth into another container. Apply at least two coats to the frame. Let dry and sand lightly between coats.

## MAHOGANY BROWN FINISH

Follow the method for ebony black finish, substituting Bismark brown powder for nigrosine powder.

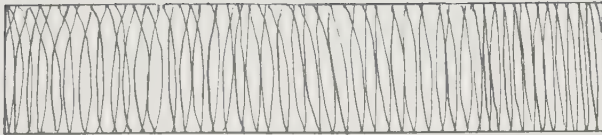
## TEXTURING

Texturing with gesso can be troublesome. But the new thick, water soluble house paints are excellent for the purpose and much easier to use. One of the new plaster wall repair products, well thinned, may be used too. The wood itself may be textured by carving or raking with a sharp tool. It is easier, however, to texture a frame after it has been coated thick with water soluble paint. Let the thick paint dry about half an hour, or until a mark scratched into it retains its shape.

Then move a comb or other toothed tool through the paint either across the grain or with it. Make straight, curved or patterned lines. Textured material such as lace, burlap, string, onion bag mesh, gauze or corduroy, may be pressed into it. Texture need not be applied to the whole frame. Coat with more white and finish in one of the following methods.

## PAINTING TEXTURES

You can give a frame depth by applying several different tints of gray. Here is what you do. To make a neutral gray for a base coat, add a little black and a little raw



Different textures

umber tinting color (from a hardware store) to white, water-soluble latex paint. Mix well. Thin with water to the consistency of heavy cream.

To make a warm, brownish gray, take a third of the original neutral gray mixture and add a little yellow and Indian Red. Mix well.

To make a cool gray, take another third of the original neutral gray and add a touch of ultramarine. Mix well.

Put the three grays — the neutral, the warm and the cool into separate jars with tight caps. Label. When the textured frame is dry, give it a base coat with the neutral gray. When it dries, give the frame a coat of warm or cool gray depending on whether the painting is in warm or cool colors.

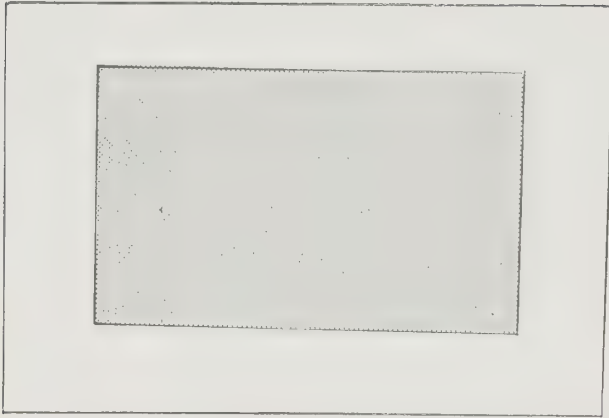
Then coat with the opposite gray. Cover a small area at a time and before it dries, wipe with a soft rag to expose the first gray underneath on the high surfaces. This gives an added dimension to the prepared texture.

Washes of umbers, earths or other colors may be given to the texture. In each case, wipe off from the high surfaces. The color should complement colors in the painting. If the frame is ridged, the narrow surfaces could be painted to pick up colors in the painting, or instead, touched with gold.

Carving may be highlighted, colors washed over, larger textures built in with PVA or white glue or a collage glued to the frame ... there is no end to the ways frames may be treated.



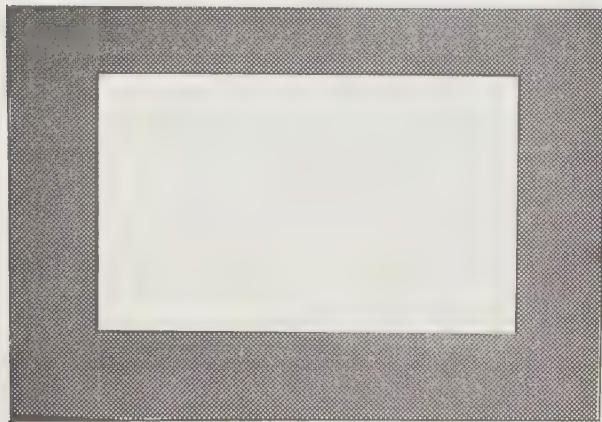
## CHOOSING MAT BOARD



Use a good quality mat board. Write for samples from different art supply stores. If you order a number of sheets through an art group, the cost is much less. It is customary for work in exhibitions to be on white or neutral to avoid conflicts with other works.

However, when framing for a special location, a colored mat board that picks up the colors in the work can be most effective. Dark mats tend to shrink the work they surround. White mats give a feeling of space. A dark mat with a light frame will give a different effect than a light mat with a dark frame.

## MAKING A MAT



Light and dark mats

Anyone with a reasonably steady hand and the right materials, can make a mat. A good size mat can be cut for about 50¢.

## TOOLS

carpenter's square, 16" x 24"  
soft sharp pencil  
mat knife and replaceable blades

Notes: A heavy, unpainted square is best. Painted squares collect dirt and this can mark the mat. The square should be kept very clean. Sharp, new blades should be used in the knife.

To work properly you need a large, firm surface. Put

the mat board on a scrap piece of the same material.

Don't use plywood under the mat board. The wood grain catches the blade and forces it off the straight line.

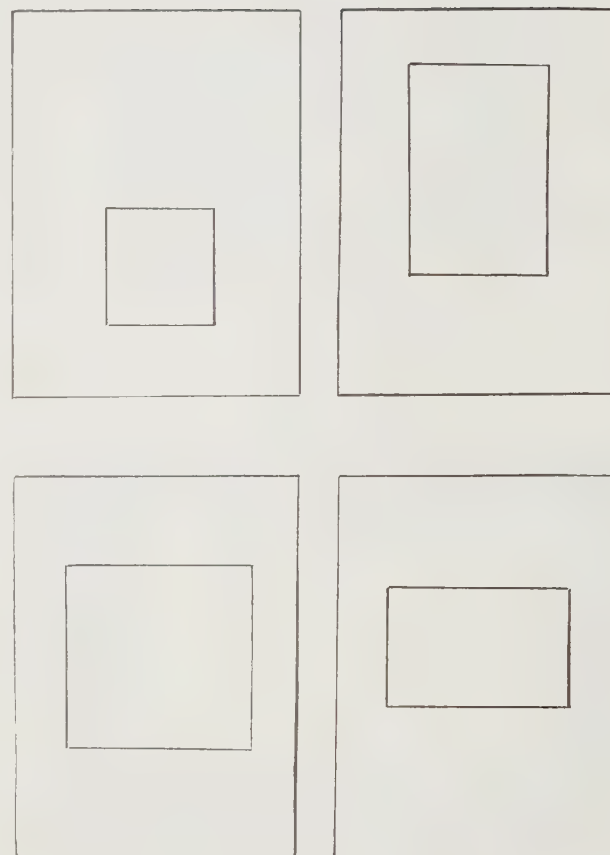
The first thing to do is to decide the size of the mat and where to put the opening.

Framers often have a rather unimaginative rule of 3" at the top and sides and 4" to 5" at the bottom. Too narrow a margin looks skimpy. One too wide tends to dwarf the work, but within these limitations there can be great variation in proportions. A few suggestions are shown here.

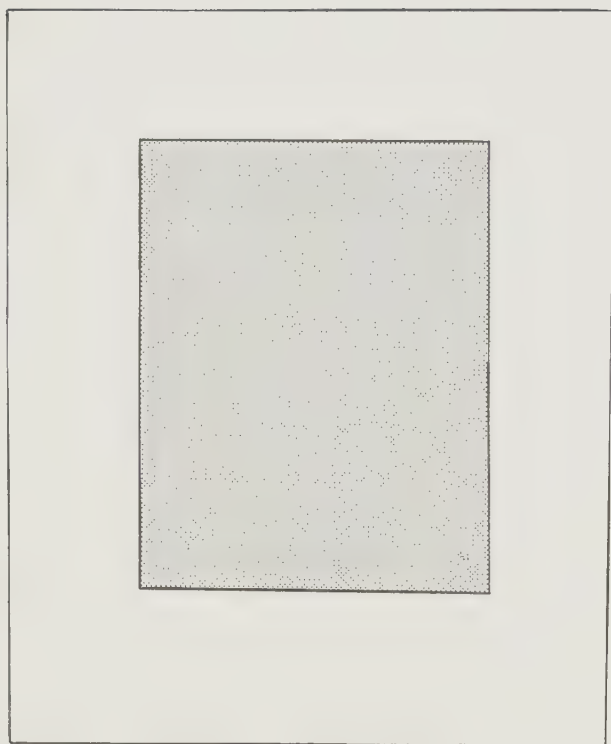
When matting reproductions, watercolors or monotypes, the mat opening covers the edge of the work slightly.

For prints, however, a small strip about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide is left around the top and sides.  $\frac{1}{2}$ " is left at the bottom for the artist's signature, title and edition number. This should be taken into account when measuring the opening. Measurements may be varied according to taste but too small an opening will cramp the print and one that is too large looks awkward.

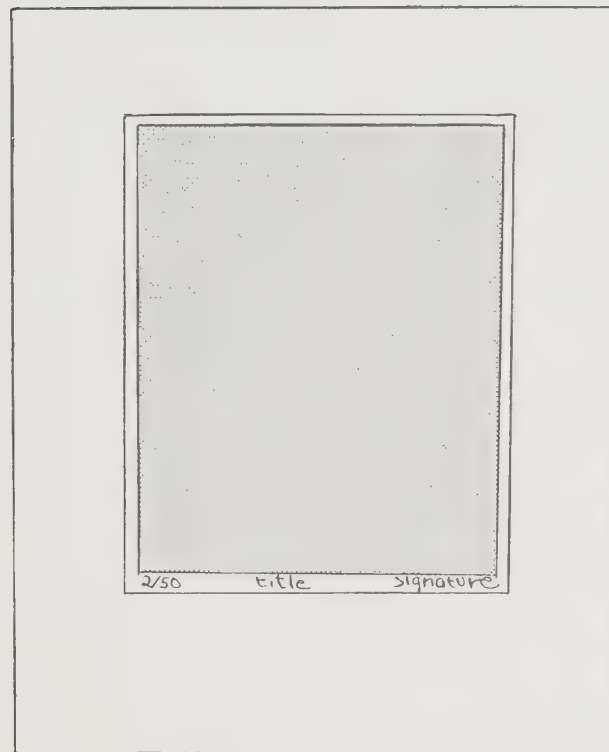
Suppose you are matting a 9" x 12" etching on a standard 16" x 20" piece of mat board. You will need an opening  $9\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $12\frac{3}{4}$ ". To arrive at the amount of space for the side margins, subtract  $9\frac{1}{2}$ " (width of opening) from 16" (width of mat board). This gives you  $6\frac{1}{2}$ ". Divide this by two to get the width of the side margins —  $3\frac{1}{4}$ " each. To arrive at the amount of space to allow at top and bottom of the mat, subtract the opening length of  $12\frac{3}{4}$ " from the length of the mat board, 20". This gives  $7\frac{1}{4}$ " to use for the top and bottom margins. If the top margin



Different mat openings



Matting a watercolor or reproduction



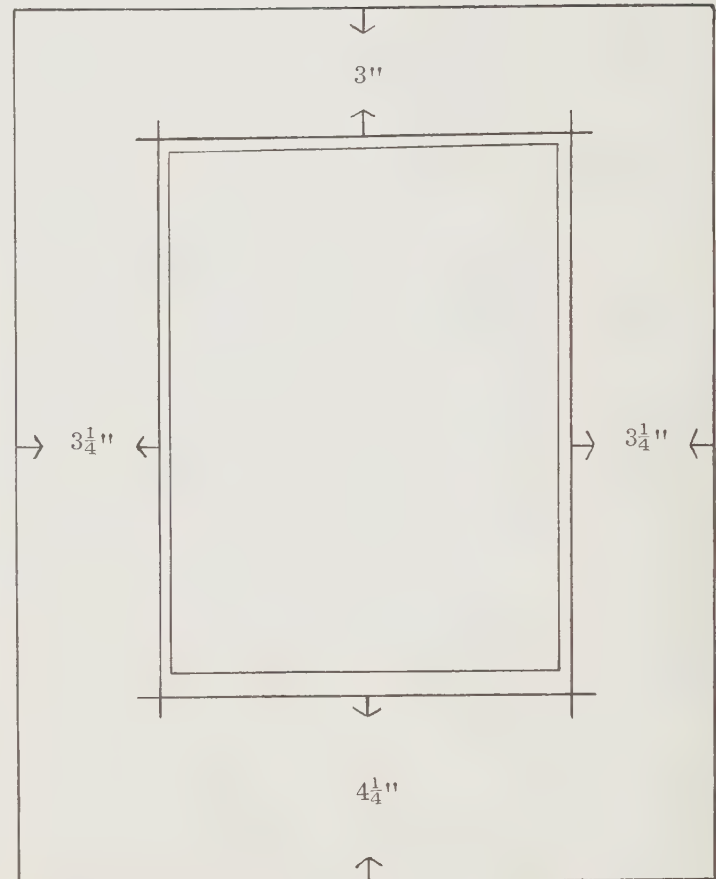
Matting a print

is to be 3", subtract this from  $7\frac{1}{4}"$  to get the bottom margin of  $4\frac{1}{4}"$ .

With a soft, sharp pencil, mark margins 3" from the top;  $3\frac{1}{4}"$  in from each side;  $4\frac{1}{2}"$  from the bottom. Draw lines in lightly and cross the lines at the corners. Check that the opening measures  $9\frac{1}{2}" \times 12\frac{3}{4}"$  to fit the etching. See diagram. Place the carpenter's square on the right hand side and  $1/8"$  below the crossed lines, with the short part of the square to the right. Hold the knife at the top of the vertical line at a  $45^\circ$  angle to give the correct level. Cut into the line drawing the knife down slowly and steadily. Hold the carpenter's square very firmly and don't bear down too hard with the knife. To keep the square steady, stop occasionally in cutting and move hand down the square so it is opposite the cutting hand.

Maintain the  $45^\circ$  angle and draw the knife down to the bottom of the line until it touches the edge of the square. Because the square is  $1/8"$  below the crossed line, the knife is stopped exactly at the corner. (This works only if you are using a carpenter's square of standard thickness.) If the cut is not clean, maintain the  $45^\circ$  angle and draw the knife down again very carefully. Do not go over the corners. Continue in the same way around the other three sides, turning the mat as you go. If corners are not quite free when the cutting is completed, hold your left hand under the mat and gently saw the corners with the knife until they come out clean. Erase the pencil lines.

If you cut properly with a very sharp knife, there should be no fuzzy edges. However, if there are, they can be smoothed away with fine sandpaper. Then polish all



Marking opening for print



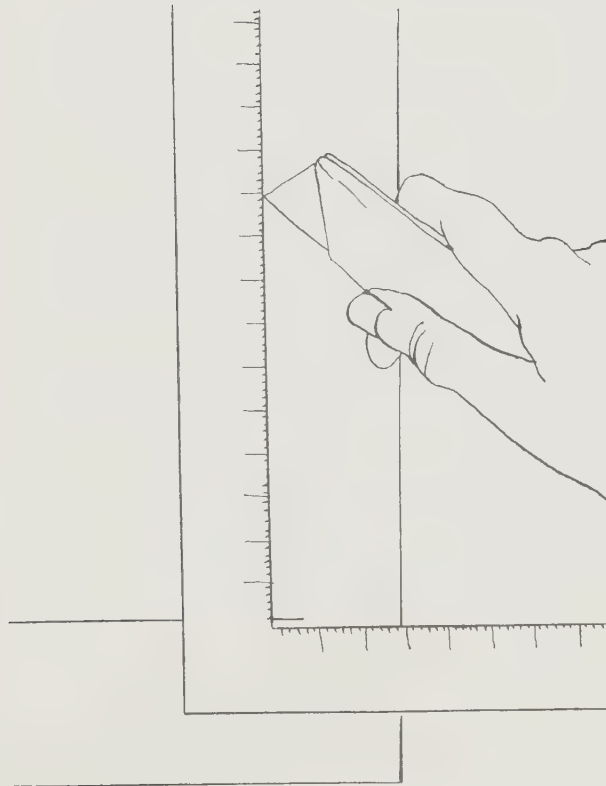
around the opening with a clean linen or other soft, white cloth.

Place the mat over the work. Fasten at the top back with tape. It is best to use the brown kraft paper tape that has glue on one side.

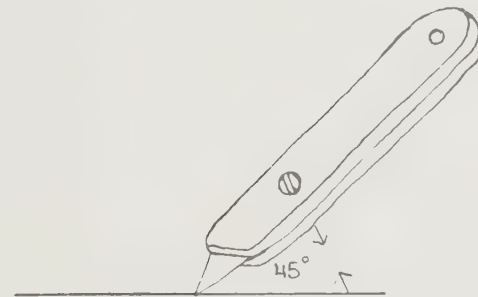
With a little practice, you should be able to turn out a good mat. If you find it hard to hold the carpenter's square steady, clamp it to the table with one or two C clamps.

You may wish to devise a semi-permanent method using C clamps and a long straight edge. Oval and circular mats are very difficult. Best to have a professional do these for you.

There are a number of mat cutting devices on the market. Look at several types and choose the one that suits you best.



Cutting a mat



Hold knife at 45 degree angle

## MUSEUM MATS

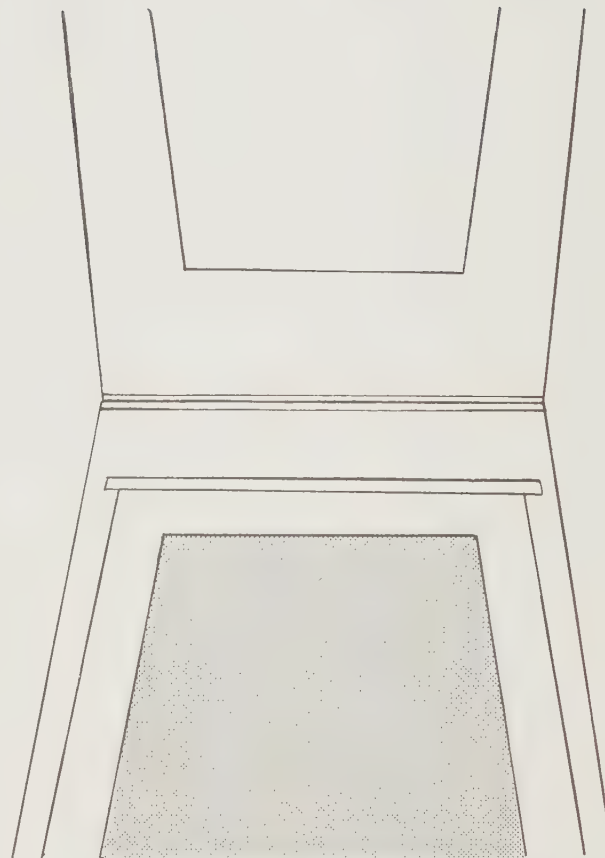
Prints or drawings to be submitted to shows "matted only" should be backed with sturdy mat board. Too thick a board creates hanging problems, while paper is too thin to give any protection. Using mill board, mat board, or board of similar weight, cut the mats. Then cut backing boards the same sizes as the mats. Sand and polish the edges smooth.

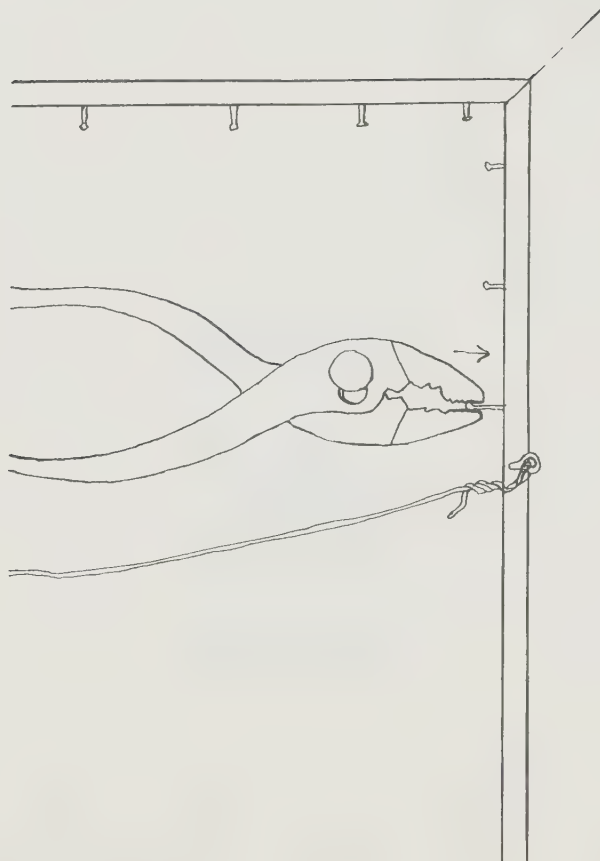
Place the mat face down. Butt the top of the backing board with the top of the mat. Hinge with a piece of masking tape. Set the print right side up on the backing board. Lower the mat over it. Adjust the print so it fits in the mat opening, then fasten it to the backing with kraft paper glue tape or masking tape. If your prints are the same size, it is easy to change them in this type of mount.

## FRAMING AND GLAZING MATTED WORKS

Plain  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch gold, silver, natural or stained wood with a flat or curved face makes the most attractive mouldings for glazed smaller works. But if the work is over 20" x 24", you will need heavier moulding because of the weight of the glass. Construct the frame as outlined on page 6. Cut or have glass cut to fit the opening easily.

Clean with glass cleaner. Static electricity makes dust on the glass a problem. To eliminate static electricity, wipe the glass with a little fabric softener solution.





Putting brads in back of frame

Place cleaned glass in the frame. Place matted work face down in frame. Check to make sure there are no specks between the glass and the work. Cover with a piece of mat or backing board the same size as the mat. Space between this and the top of the back of the frame may be filled with stiff cardboard held in place with special swivel clips. These clips are fastened to the frame and make it very easy to change the picture. Brads may be used instead of clips. These should be pushed into the frame at 2 or 3 inch intervals with pliers. See illustration.

If the frame is oak or walnut or other hard wood, putting in brads is difficult.

To finish, cut a piece of brown wrapping paper 1" larger than the frame. Dampen paper with a sponge. Spread glue on the back of the frame and smooth on the paper. Trim off excess paper using ruler and very sharp knife. The paper should dry smooth and taut over the back of the frame.

Screw eyes may be fastened into the back  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  way down. For larger works, four screw eyes with a crossed arrangement of heavy picture wire may be needed. Glazed work is usually submitted to shows without screw eyes.

Clips to hold a matted work together with its glass and backing are available at art supply stores and picture framers. These can be inexpensive and are an excellent solution to the problem of framing odd items like Christmas cards, photographs, reproductions and so on. Some of the clips are large enough for big prints and it is easy to slip work in and out of these "frames".

Ingenuity in searching for mouldings, stripping and other materials not usually used for picture framing can be rewarding. Inexpensive materials such as metal door strips, wooden weather stripping, anodized aluminium window stripping and counter edging may be used.

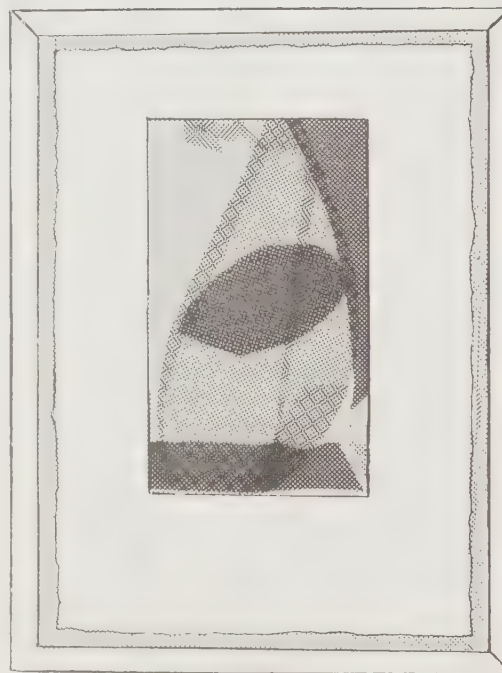
### OTHER MOUNTING METHODS

When prints or other works are framed, they are not always matted. For instance, if they are printed on nicely torn rag paper with clean, well-proportioned, straight margins, they may be glued in the top corners and placed directly on a piece of mat board, then framed.

Another way is to mount the work on a piece of colored mat board which picks up a color in the work. Then make a mat of a size to leave a narrow border of color showing around the edge.

A handy, inexpensive method of displaying small prints and reproductions is to place the work under glass and hold it together with plastic or metal mirror clips.

Large prints may be placed on  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch plywood, covered with a piece of single diamond glass the same size, and held together with mirror clips of plastic or metal. You will need mirror clips which permit screws to go into the side of the plywood. If you use plexiglass instead of glass, the frame will be lighter.



Unmatted print mounted on colored board



## PLASTICS

Many new ways are being discovered to exhibit prints, drawings and watercolors using plexiglass or other plastics. This material gives a firm support and permits light to filter through. Experimenting can produce unusual and interesting results.

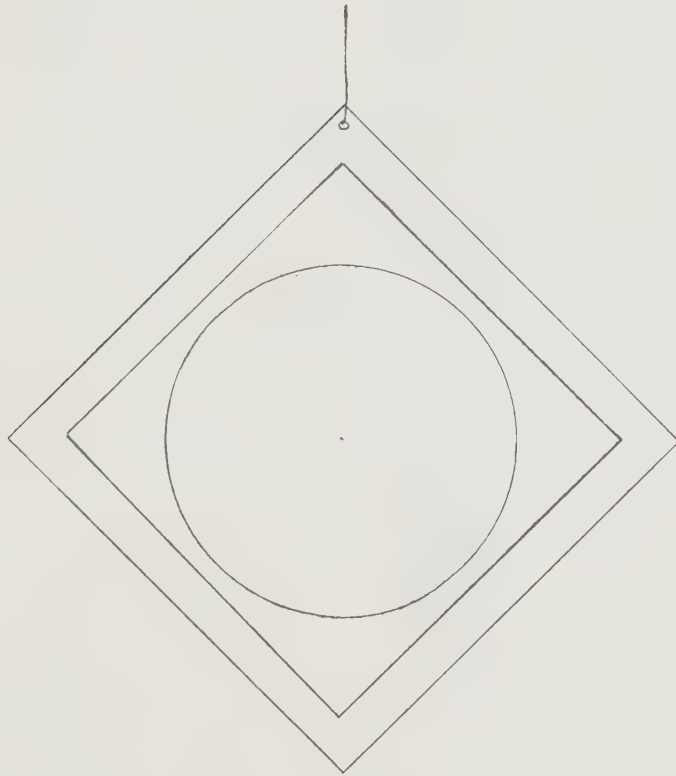
Plexiglass comes in several thicknesses, colors, opaque whites, smoky grays, black and clear. It is expensive and special glues and tapes are needed. It scratches easily, but can be repolished.

Prints can be sandwiched between sheets of plain or colored plexiglass and fastened either with two way tape or special glue on the edges dried under pressure. The sandwiches may be hung on nylon cord or mounted on stands.

The plastic may be moulded or curved so that it stands alone. Plastic boxes can be constructed so that the work is supported within, giving a cubic dimension to a flat print.

Several sandwiches can be hung in a series with light showing through them. Prints may be silk screened on plastic and hung in the same way. This method poses hanging problems and calls for special illumination techniques. The possibilities are exciting. For instance, a print may be printed in transparent ink so that the light glows through the colors and makes the back as interesting as the front.

Here is a simple method of handling prints for travelling shows. Paint a piece of composition board or plywood



Print sandwiched between plexiglass

white or a color. Put the matted or unmatted work on this board and cover with a sheet of plexiglass the same size as the board. Fasten at the top of the mat with brass or plastic screws. If long plastic screws are allowed to go through and project from the back about 1", they will bring the work forward from the plane of the wall.

Another method is to put the matted or unmatted work on a smooth board or other firm support. The edges are then built up  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1" with white painted pine stripping. A piece of plexiglass the same size is placed on top of the stripping. Strips of plexiglass are fitted round the sides and glued to each other and the front piece. Small flathead brass or steel screws are screwed into pre-drilled holes at sides. (See diagram at right.)



Plexiglass held with white tape



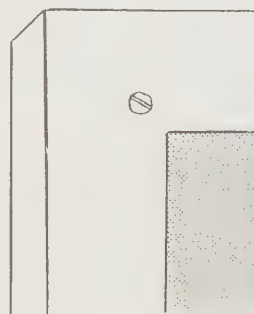
Plexiglass box frame

## DRY MOUNTING

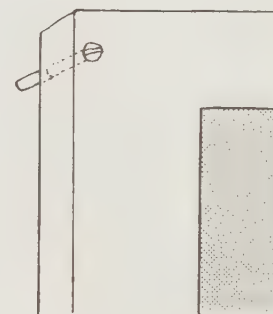
This gives a very smooth surface, better than you can obtain with glue. Small photos and reproductions which need a sturdy backing can be dry-mounted with photographers dry mounting tissue, using an iron set at "wool" and ironing from center to edge. If the work is large, have it done by a professional framer with a large dry mounting press.

## SHIPPING WORK

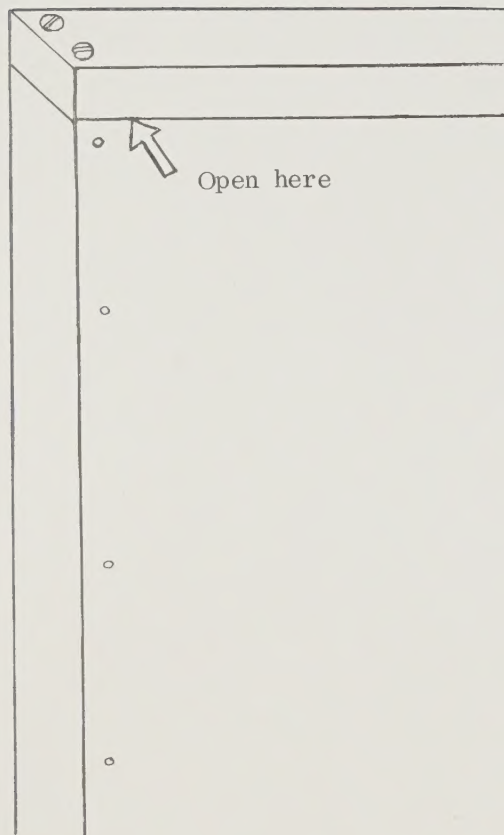
Whether the work is to be shipped to experienced gallery personnel or to volunteer workers, it should be neatly



Plexiglass screwed to wood support



Screw protruding from back



Crate with screws in top

packaged or crated, so that it can be opened easily and re-shipped without complications.

If you work to standard sizes and depending on how many shows you might want to ship to at the same time, you may wish to have three or more crates made to fit the largest size. Remember, that if the work is accepted, the crates are kept for some time before they are shipped back to you.

### HOW TO MAKE A CRATE

A light crate, suitable for shipping two matted prints can be made from 1" x 2" stripping. Fasten the side pieces to the bottom piece with regular or spiral nails.

The top piece is fastened to the two side pieces with screws. (See diagram.) Cut two pieces of board, masonite or plywood to fit the frame. Fasten them to the frame at the sides and bottom with large tacks or small nails. It is easy to open and close this crate by unscrewing or screwing the top piece of stripping. Wrap prints in brown paper and use tissue paper between the prints for protection.

Paintings or larger works require stronger crates but they can be made on the same idea. For top, bottom and ends, use 1" x 4" or 1" x 6" boards. The sides could be heavier plywood, composition board or slats. Corners should be braced with pieces of mitred 1" x 4". The top piece of the crate should be hinged.

Lots of packing should be used because crates get rough

handling. Sheets of plastic foam, or corrugated cardboard are good. If the work is glazed, the glass should be strengthened with criss-crossed masking tape.

If you pack, crate and ship your work properly, it is apt to be handled and returned carefully.

## CONCLUSION

To get you started, a few framing possibilities have been touched on in this booklet.

Artists and framers are forever coming up with new approaches and there is just no end to the imaginative way works may be displayed. There is no reason you too can't turn on your creative instincts and invent new and different methods of your own!





**ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
YOUTH AND RECREATION BRANCH**